



**Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention  
(ATOP)**

[www.meaningfulworld.com](http://www.meaningfulworld.com)

**Genocide Prevention, Upholding United Nations Human Rights  
Declaration and Sustainable Development Goals**

**26 April 2025**

**Trishla Saran & Dr. Ani Kalayjian**

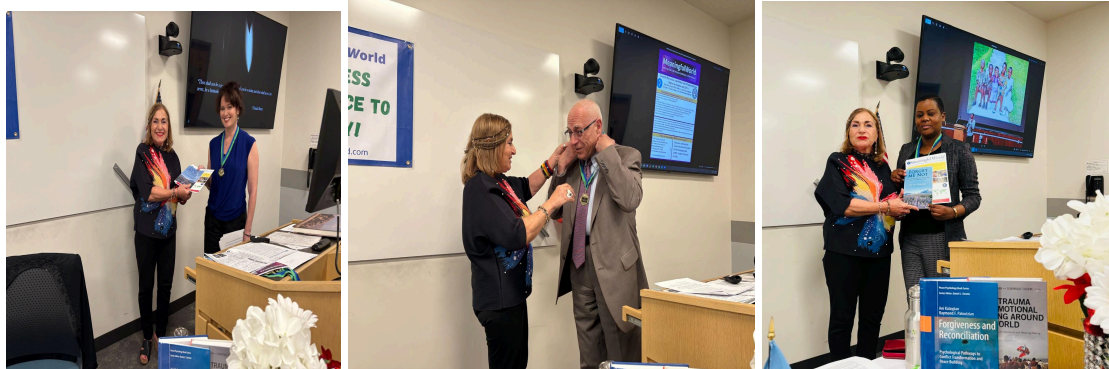
*How do we prevent Genocide? How has genocide impacted generations of people? How can we raise awareness for the prevention of genocides?* On 26 April 2025, ATOP MeaningfulWorld organized and presented an informative, poignant, and timely program at Fordham University. The theme of the program was "Genocide Prevention: Upholding United Nations Human Rights Declaration and SDGs". The event was designed to delve into the mechanisms of preventing genocide and exploring practical strategies for healing, educating, empowering, and raising awareness to its negative impact, individually, generationally, collectively, vicariously, and horizontally. Our program was designed to align closely with multiple United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with emphasis on Goals 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 13, 16, and 17, underscoring a comprehensive approach towards partnering to foster peace, justice, and strong institutions.

The room was filled with banners displaying positive messages, fresh tulips, flags, candles for the speakers table and the audience, and a delicious reception with fresh fruits, dates, nuts & sweets. The workshop opened with sage essential oil being passed around to cleanse the air around and our inner energy. Guests received a warm reception from **Trishla Saran**, Education Coordinator of ATOP Meaningfulworld who introduced **Dr. Kalayjian**, the Founder and President of ATOP Meaningfulworld. Dr. Kalayjian described the purpose of Genocide Prevention, led a moment of silence, paying respect to the memory of genocide victims around the world. This somber tribute set a reflective tone for the discussions unfolding throughout the day.

**Dr. Harold Takooshian**, a Psychology Professor at Fordham University, took the stage to highlight the essential role of education in genocide prevention. He praised Dr. Ani for her work around the globe to help those who have been victims of genocide. Dr. Ani shared that 24

April was the 110th anniversary of Ottoman Turkish Genocide of Armenians, presented slides on being a child of a survivor, discussing how genocide is transmitted generationally. She talked about the importance of oral histories and encouraged people to share their stories, and our collaboration with the centers at Columbia University & Oxford University. Flower remedies of 'Peace & Justice,' and 'Ancestry Align' were also discussed for healing.

The next panelist was **Stephanie Fagin-Jones, Ph.D.** an Adjunct Associate professor at Teachers College, Columbia University and has published numerous articles, book chapters and lectures on the topic of Holocaust Heroism for the International Association of Heroism Science. She discussed how some people rescued Jews during the Holocaust risking their lives and shining a new light of hope on so many. Heroism research attempted to understand the levels of courage and bravery within the rescuers. Dr. Fagin-Jones also shared her thesis, in which she examined personality variables in bystanders and rescuers of crime.



We then viewed the film “Faces of Persecution- Genocide 2.0” which exhibited 2023 horrific attack of Azerbaijan forces on the indigenous Armenian population in Artsakh. The ethnic cleansing by Azerbaijani forces on 120,000 innocent Armenians. The film showed the cruelty demonstrated by Azeri forces who continue to oppress Armenia in continuous revisionist methods supported by Turkey and Israel.

Next speaker was **Consolee Nimishee**, an author, a motivational speaker, and a survivor of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda when she was fourteen years old. She suffered physical and emotional torture during her three months hiding and miraculously survived with her mother and younger sister. Consolee showed a film on the survivors of the Tutsi Genocide, the trauma they experienced, and how she healed through prayers, forgiveness, writing, speaking, and being an activist. The film also shows the future generation who are trying to build Rwanda again, bringing in new shades of hope and victory in the country. Consolee also discussed how she has only one picture of her siblings as her home was destroyed and she cherishes that last picture. She talked about some of her memories during the genocide and the cruelty her people experienced. She mentioned that a rescuer was kind enough to help her and how fortunate she is to have escaped. She has been through a healing journey and inspires others to share their stories of hope and survival.

**Deacon Hovannes Khosdegian**, was next, who studied philosophy and theology at the Pontifical Gregorian and St. Thomas Aquinas Universities, in Rome, Italy, specializing in Pedagogy and Marxism. His graduate work is in Biblical studies. Currently, he is the Armenian Language Ministry Specialist at the Diocese of the Armenian Church, NYC. He gave us

structural perspectives. The Ottoman Empire had a layered and complex legal system combining Ottoman Tribal Law, Byzantine institutions, Islamic Sharia (Sheriat), ethnic group laws (Millet system), and later, Western influences. Armenians, like other non-Muslim groups, were governed under the Millet system, which granted limited autonomy based on religion but placed them below Muslims in legal and social standing. Sharia law reinforced Muslim supremacy, denying non-Muslims basic rights, including property ownership and personal security. The practice of *devshirme* involved taking Christian boys for state service. Over time, concerns about the Armenians' treatment under these laws became known as the "Armenian Question." He concluded stating that until the structures of governments don't go through transformation, we will continue experiencing these horrors.

We then shifted to a positive mood of survival, resilience, joy, and beautiful music and dance of the next generation, the **Hamazkayin of NJ Nayiri Dance Ensemble**, with **Barkev Sanossian**, the Creative Director, Instructor and Choreographer who performed three types of Armenian dances, which symbolized the past, present and future. Some of the stomping in the dance symbolized stomping on the past bad souls, to keep negativity away from our present as well as the future and to prevent further trauma and pain in the world.

A healthy reception followed. Speakers received MeaningfulWorld medals, books, & organic herbs. While gifts were bestowed to speakers and dancers, a lively networking, informal Q & A followed. Everyone mingled with each other, exchanging compliments and stories and taking pictures and sharing business cards.



After the workshop, a healing session took place. **Sharon Feldine**, led the group through a fruitful healing session using the **7-Step Integrative Healing Model** (Kalayjian, A. 2018) as her guidepost. Participants shared high levels of frustration, sadness, worry and disappointment. Many shared sources of their negative feelings and received empathy & validation from other participants. At the 4th step of the support group, when transformation takes place, participants were asked to reflect on lessons learned. One participant said, "Take action" and another said, "Practice acceptance". Others felt relieved sharing their emotions & valued empathy. Participants were also asked to re-evaluate their negative emotions after the session and all participants reported a substantial decrease in their negative emotions.

As the workshop concluded, Dr. Kalayjian revisited the urgent need for vigilance and proactive measures against ongoing and potential genocides. She emphasized the importance of acknowledging and confronting denial, which often exacerbates the trauma experienced by communities. She said denial is the last stage of Genocide. Her parting questions challenged the audience to evaluate whether



the current educational curriculum was sufficiently teaching the lessons from past atrocities and what improvements were necessary to ensure that future generations could learn from and prevent historical traumas.

We then practiced **Soul-Surfing**. A series of exercises stretches and affirmations that address each of the 7-chakras, colors, and the areas in our bodies. Affirming phrases were: “I am assertive, I am mindful”, “I nurture Mother Earth”, and “I am a peaceful warrior”. The Soul-Surfing exercises were a wonderful way to connect with Mother Earth. The workshop concluded with a short meditation to recenter participants and prepare us to embrace our day. Kindly register for the 17 May workshop, to ensure your place at graduation on 5 June 2025 at the United Nations.

Overall, the ATOP MeaningfulWorld workshop succeeded in instilling a renewed sense of duty and hope among its participants. It underscored that through education, reflection, and shared experiences, communities can collaborate effectively to prevent the horrors of genocide and build a more empathetic and just world guided by empathy and compassion.

Throughout the event, the theme **"When one helps another, BOTH become stronger"** resonated, highlighting the communal and supportive approach advocated by ATOP MeaningfulWorld. The workshop not only educated attendees on the historical and contemporary issues surrounding genocide but also fostered a sense of community and shared responsibility among participants.

Special gratitude to all the sponsors, ATOP MeaningfulWorld, ACRPC, Fordham University. Gratitude to all the speakers, especially to the Nayiri Dance Ensemble, Silva Baronian, David Kryzhanovskiy, and to every one of the participants.



Visit us at: [www.meaningfulworld.com](http://www.meaningfulworld.com)